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The Show Must Go On

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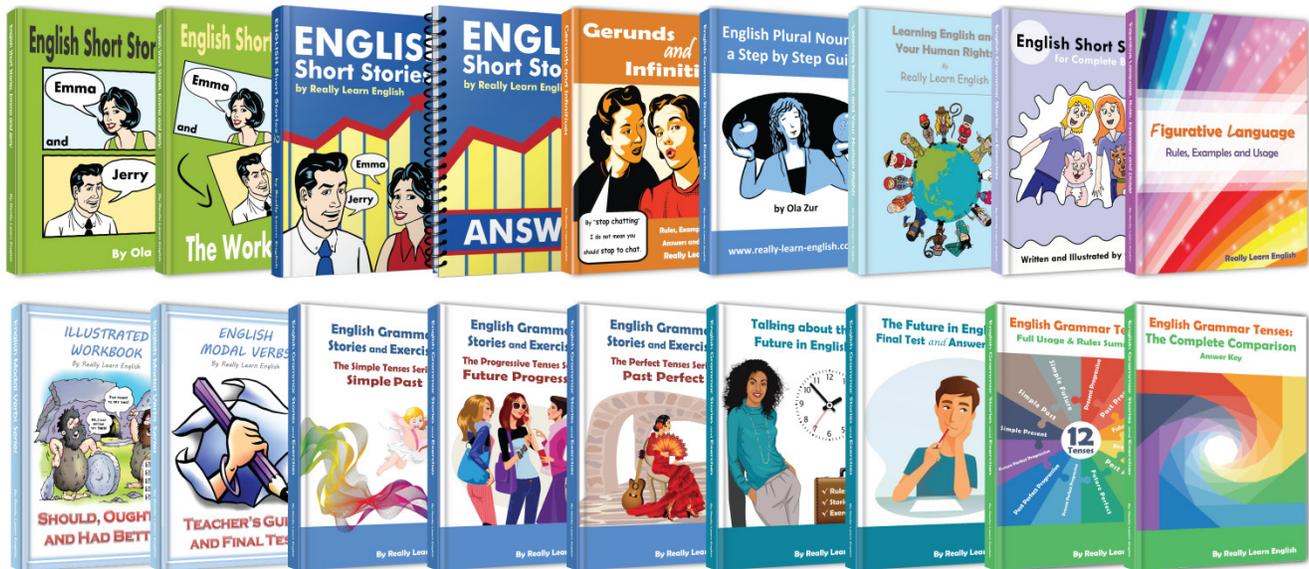
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Love Stories in Simple English for English Learners

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Before Reading

Don't guess! If you don't know a word in the story, check it in the story's glossary or a simple dictionary.

Story Glossary

after-party: a party after a large event.

argue: to give reasons to support or oppose something.

bar: a place where drinks are served.

busy: to keep yourself busy with something.

caress: to touch someone in a gentle way.

clench: to press or hold something tightly.

coal-black: black as coal (a hard, black substance that is extracted from the ground and burned as fuel).

comfort: relief from a bad feeling.

contentment: feeling happy or satisfied.

coo: to speak in a gentle way.

coordinator: a person who organizes an activity so that everything works together well.

cry: 1. to say loudly. 2. To have tears because you are sad.

drama: performing as an actor.

fictitious: invented and not real.

fondly: in a way that shows that you like someone.

glance: a quick look.

glare: to look at someone or something in an angry way.

joyful: very happy.

mannerism: someone's particular way of talking or moving.

monotonous: always the same and boring.

nod: to move your head up and down to show you agree.

outreach coordinator: a person in an organization that promotes awareness, finds volunteers, and organizes events for that organization.

outreach: bringing information or services to people.

packed: completely full.

pasture: a land covered with grass.

phenomenal: extremely successful in an impressive way.

run off: to suddenly leave

rush: a strong feeling caused by something exciting.

shrine: a religious place where people pray.

slam: to throw or put something down with force.

snap: to speak in a sudden, angry way.

speak up: to say what you think bravely.

spectacular: very good and impressive.

sprint: to run very fast for a short distance.

stray: separated from the main part.

swing: to move backward and/or forward from a fixed point.

thread: a long thin line of something.

TV studio: a place where TV shows are produced.

unbridled: not controlled or limited in any way.

Fill in the Blanks

Practice the new words. Fill in the blanks with the right word or expression from the list on the previous page.

Part A

1. After the play, there is a small _____.
2. He recognized me with a single _____.
3. She puts a _____ or two of black hair behind her ear.
4. We saw many famous people in the _____.
5. Let's meet at the _____ for a drink.
6. Her son is the only thing that gives her _____ in her illness.
7. This actress took many _____ lessons.
8. The son has the same _____ as his father.
9. We need a _____ to coordinate all the activities.
10. They make efforts to expand the _____ to new people.
11. The _____ organized a beautiful event for new people.
12. Cows like to eat and relax at the _____.
13. During the tennis match, he always feels a strong _____.
14. He comes to the _____ every day and prays.
15. After a short _____, she slows down to a walk.

Part B

1. Life seem very _____ to her. Every day seems the same.
2. Jack's eyes are _____.
3. The theater is _____ today!
4. I feel _____. I don't want to change a thing.
5. It's a _____ character. This person doesn't really exist.
6. In her acting, she performs with such _____ emotions.
7. We are _____ because we won.
8. Martha pushes back a _____ curl of hair.
9. That was a _____ performance. Everyone is impressed.
10. "You are very nice," Charles says _____ to Amber.

Part C

1. "There is no reason to do this!" she _____.
2. "Don't be afraid," Sam _____.
3. Suddenly the windows _____ open.
4. Jonathan and Magen _____ themselves with books.
5. Janet's fingers _____ her husband's face.
6. They are so angry that they _____ their fists.
7. "Don't go there!" I _____.
8. She will be very sad to hear this and will _____.
9. I'm very angry, but all I do is _____ at him.
10. "Yes, I'll come!" I _____.
11. Stop the thief! He may _____ with the money.
12. Dan will _____ his glass on the table and leave.
13. "Stop telling me what to do!" I _____.
14. They cannot take it any longer, so they will _____ about their working conditions.
15. This singer has a _____ success.

The Show Must Go On



The stage lights shine brightly on Cho's face. She cannot see the audience but can feel its attention. She is so excited to be on stage in the most famous theatre in South Korea's capital, Seoul. But she must stay focused – the show is not yet over. Taking a deep breath, she looks at her partner, Han, across the stage and delivers the final line of the play.

As the audience's loud applause fills the great hall, the curtains fall and Cho and Han return to the quiet dressing room. Cho is both joyful and exhausted. The play was a phenomenal success but something bothers her.

"That was amazing, Cho!" cries Han. Cho nods slowly. She can feel the rush of the moment leaving her and twisting into dissatisfaction and confusion. "Is something wrong?" Han asks, crossing the dressing room and gently taking her hand. "Hey, we're finished. That's it. You were wonderful." After a moment he asks again, "What's wrong?"

"Nothing's... wrong," replies Cho hesitantly. Chewing on her lip, she continues, "I just feel like my character was a bit too real – like I really *am* Kodama, the lady who runs away from city life to live in the forest."

A confused smile spreads across Han's face. "We're actors. We're supposed to be our characters. That's what we live for." With a gentle hand, he caresses her face pushing back stray threads of black hair. "You did your job wonderfully."

Cho meets his eyes in short glances before nodding into his warm hand.

Suddenly the door to the dressing room swings open to reveal an excited stage crew. "Congratulations!" they shout all together, gathering around Cho and Han. As Cho is covered in praise and flowers, she can't help but wonder about the dark feelings developing within her.

* * *

Over the following few days, the play's grand success continues with night after night of packed theaters and crowds. Suddenly it seems everyone in Daehangno, the cultural center of Seoul, is talking about Cho and Han. Everywhere Cho looks there are posters with their images on them. Shop windows with televisions play continuous promotions for the theater and advertise special, limited-time offers for tickets.

Although Cho enjoys the sudden fame and recognition, she feels lost. She realizes that she has started acting strangely. She knows she is acting less like herself and more like her character, Kodama, but she can't stop. Everything about Kodama seems *right*.

Kodama doesn't eat meat; Cho also stops eating meat. Kodama goes for long walks in the forest in the middle of the night; Cho enjoys sitting quietly beneath the trees of the local park. Every mannerism Cho added while acting as Kodama on stage becomes her own. Over the following weeks, Cho transforms. The sense that something is missing makes her heart hurt. She can only find comfort in the fictitious character, Kodama.

It is before the play's final performance one night that Han pulls aside Cho. "This is the big one. There are so many important people sitting in the audience tonight. Even the Prime Minister is here!" Han holds Cho's face fondly. "I'm glad you're my partner. I couldn't do this with anyone else. I'm glad you're here."

Swallowing, Cho lets her eyes fall to the floor. "I don't... think I'm supposed to be here."

"What do you mean?"

"This... isn't what I want." Cho glances up at her partner. "How does that make you feel?"

Han sighs softly. "To be honest, Cho, I don't understand. But... I need you here right now. Let's talk afterward, yes?" Seeing the worry in Han's eyes, Cho nods quickly.

* * *

After nearly three hours of uninterrupted dialogue, unbridled emotions, and spectacular acting, Cho and Han make their way from the dressing rooms to the bar downstairs to meet with their fans and guests. Cho, who is somewhat overwhelmed by the countless words of congratulations from adoring fans, finds she would rather be left alone. Acting as her character for such an extended period of time was both tiring and confusing.

For nearly the entire play she felt as though *she* was Kodama. She was no longer Cho; she was the Korean lady of the forest and as such, she wanted to be left alone.

About an hour into the after-party, a gray-haired stranger in a nice suit asks Cho and Han for a private conversation which Cho immediately accepts. She can't stand to be around so many people right now.

Once alone, the older gentleman introduces himself as Rob Leon, the executive director of a major television network. He offers them a contract and an impressive salary before leaving his business card with them.

"Cho, we have to take this chance!" says Han excitedly leaning on the small table between them.

"Are you sure?" she asks. "We don't know much about him. This could be a scam."

"True, but we can review the contract," replies Han, "and we'll be TV stars!"

With a quiet sigh, Cho stands up. "Can we talk about it later? I'm going to the ladies' room."

Head full of questions, Cho walks down the hallway to the restroom. Can they trust Rob Leon? She knew about his television network. There were few who didn't. But could all of this be so simple? Something in her gut cautioned her.

"Uh, Miss Cho?"

Cho pauses to find a tall man wearing a uniform of casual white clothes nearby. Did she walk right past him? "Yes?"

"Do you have a moment? I'd like a word with you." The man with coal-black hair and clear, gray eyes doesn't appear unfriendly, but Cho's patience is disappearing. "I promise it won't take longer than a few minutes," the man adds sensing her hesitancy.

With a quick glance down the hallway, Cho joins the man. "How can I help you?"

"My name is Li Huang and I am the outreach coordinator for a community named Sanshin."

"I've never heard of that," replies Cho suspiciously.

"Few have. We are a small community located north of Seoul where people can go to relax and get away from the city. We act as a small town and take in anyone who wishes

to slow down and have more nature in their life. We have a functioning school and hospital as well as numerous community gardens and pastures.”

As Li continues to describe to Cho all that Sanshin has to offer, Cho’s heart starts to beat fast. Could this be it? Could this be her chance at a simple life away from the city?

“And... what do you want from me?” Cho finally says quietly. She is almost too afraid to ask.

“I know it is not the most glamorous job, but we were wondering if you would be interested in teaching drama and art at our school. We would provide you with a small salary as well as a house.” Li smiles. “The pay would be far less than what you’re making right now, but the job is very rewarding.”

At a loss for words, Cho stares at Li.

“What do you say?” asks Li with a kind smile.

“Ah, there you are,” calls Han appearing further down the hallway. “I was getting worried. You were gone for so long.”

When Cho turns back to Li she finds the man already walking down a separate hallway, his arms folded politely behind his back.

“Who was that?” asks Han joining her. Unsure, Cho simply shakes her head. “Come on. There are some people I want you to meet.”

Sometime later after the crowds left, Cho finally shares with Han all the man, Li Huang, told her.

“It’s nothing compared to what we can get for the TV show,” Han points out after taking a long sip from his drink. “Anyway, our home is here in Seoul.”

That night Cho dreams of forest rivers and great, pine trees. Though she seems to be among them, she cannot touch them. The following morning she wakes up in a bad

mood. Realizing that living in a forest community was not practical, she calls Han and agrees to the TV deal.

* * *

The next week they start work at the TV studio. While their salaries are not what Mister Leon originally promised, they don't complain. After all, the executive director of a television network is making them stars!

"I'm sure this is only the beginning," Han tells Cho after three weeks of tiring and unrewarding work. "We'll be TV stars soon!"

One month goes by, and then another, and another. When Han finally decides to speak up about the numerous small parts they have been given in unpopular television shows, Mister Leon promises them better work. Despite this however, their lives remain monotonous and boring. Every day is the same for Cho – wake up, go to work, come home, eat, go to bed.

One Friday, they decide that even though they are exhausted they need to take a break and so go out to a karaoke bar. After Cho reluctantly sings her first song, Han smiles and jokingly says, "Your voice could be so beautiful if only you learned how to sing in tune."

Somewhat hurt, Cho stares at him. "I wasn't that bad."

"I've heard better," replies Han.

Knowing that he's just trying to make a joke, Cho busies herself with her food. Unfortunately, Han brings it up again later after she sings once more.

"I'm an actress, not a singer," replies Cho angrily.

"Everyone can get better, right?"

Clenching her fists, Cho glares at him. "Maybe you should go ask Mister Leon to make me into a singer then. He's already promised we'll be TV stars and we can see how well that's going!"

“I’m just trying to help,” Han argues. “Stop getting so angry.”

Cho slams her glass on the small table between them. “I don’t need your help!” she snaps before running out of the bar into the city. Furious and unaware of Han’s calls following her, Cho sprints down the street, nearly losing her red, high-heeled shoes.

Where did she go wrong? Why was everything falling apart?

When she finally slows down, she realizes that she’s outside her favorite park. Breathing heavily, she walks through the park’s main gates to gaze at the small, red shrine just inside. Although she passed it often, she never took the time to actually study it.

“Cho!”

Cho doesn’t look away from the shrine as Han joins her. She can’t pull her eyes from the illustration of a peaceful old man carefully painted on its inner walls.

“Hey,” coos Han. He too is out of breath. “I’m sorry.”

Slowly Cho looks at him. She can’t help the tears forming in her eyes. It seemed like everything was falling apart. “I can’t keep going,” she whispers.

Slowly, Han approaches her. “I know. I can’t... keep going either. This is breaking us.”

“I mean...” Cho clears her throat. “I can’t keep doing this. I can’t be here. I can’t be here with you.”

“Then let’s go,” replies Han quickly. Surprised, Cho stares at him. “Let’s leave.”

“But Han... I know you don’t want that.”

With gentle hands, Han wraps an arm around her waist. “*You* are what I want and if I can’t be here with you, I don’t want to be here at all.”

“Han, I don’t want to kill your dreams – ”

With a small smile, Han kisses her. Caught off guard, Cho freezes momentarily before allowing herself to be bent to his form. With a sigh of contentment, she intertwines her fingers into his rich black hair and kisses him back. For months she wanted to kiss him, to become more than just friends, but she kept her distance. She feared Han have always seen her as a friend and partner, not as a lover. This proved otherwise.

After a long moment, Han pulls away, kisses her nose, and then smiles. "I've wanted to do that for a long time."

Suddenly aware of the tears on her cheeks, Cho wipes them and smiles up at him.

"Well, since we've decided to run off, where should we go?" Han shifts his attention to the shrine and the peaceful old man that was painted on its inner walls. "Ideas?"

"Sanshin," replies Cho with a nod. "How about Sanshin?"

"Sanshin?"

"The community in the forest north of Seoul."

Han considers her for a moment before nodding excitedly. "Yeah, ok. Let's do it. Let's go to Sanshin!"

Exercises

Vocabulary Questions

1. What does "caress" mean?
 - a) to touch someone in a gentle way
 - b) to care for someone
 - c) to care less about someone than someone else

2. What does "clench" mean?
 - a) to clean something thoroughly
 - b) to close and open your hand repeatedly
 - c) to press or hold something tightly

3. What does "coo" mean?
 - a) to speak in a gentle way
 - b) to make sounds like a chicken
 - c) to cook something quickly

4. What does "fictitious" mean?
 - a) very angry
 - b) invented and not real
 - c) not honest

5. What does "glance" mean?

- a) a quick look
- b) to look at someone or something in an angry way
- c) to look at someone or something in a sad way

6. What does "glare" mean?

- a) a quick look
- b) to look at someone or something in an angry way
- c) to look at someone or something in a sad way

7. What does "mannerism" mean?

- a) someone's particular way of talking or moving
- b) someone's favorite method of achieving things
- c) someone's friends and family

8. What does "packed" mean?

- a) already closed
- b) completely full
- c) almost empty

9. What does "pasture" mean?

- a) a small lake
- b) a lake with ducks
- c) a land covered with grass

10. What does "snap" mean?

- a) to hit someone
- b) to ask someone to leave
- c) to speak in a sudden, angry way

11. What does "stray" mean?

- a) separated from the main part
- b) completely straight
- c) standing

12. What does "unbridled" mean?

- a) not controlled or limited in any way
- b) married
- c) spontaneous

13. What does "sprint" mean?

- a) when spring arrives
- b) to run very fast for a short distance
- c) to jump up and down

14. What does "swing" mean?

- a) to break accidentally
- b) to lift a few things with a single hand
- c) to move backward and/or forward from a fixed point

Grammar Questions

1. The stage lights shine brightly _____ Cho's face.
 - a) from
 - b) by
 - c) on

2. I just feel like my character was a bit _____ real.
 - a) too
 - b) to
 - c) than

3. _____ the following few days, the play's grand success continues.
 - a) As
 - b) While
 - c) Over

4. Where _____ we go?
 - a) have
 - b) should
 - c) needs

5. She is so excited to _____ on stage.
 - a) have
 - b) will
 - c) be

6. The play was a phenomenal success _____ something bothers her.

- a) but
- b) and
- c) since

7. Han finally decides to speak _____ about the issues.

- a) up
- b) down
- c) of

8. Cho _____ sings her first song.

- a) doesn't want to
- b) sad to
- c) reluctantly

9. We would provide you with a small salary _____ a house.

- a) as well as
- b) too
- c) also

10. Do you have _____ moment?

- a) the
- b) this
- c) a

Comprehension Questions

1. What bothers Cho? Why isn't she happy?

2. Why are Cho and Han approached by Mister Leon?

3. What does he promise them? And what does really happen?

4. Why does Han tells Cho they should both leave?

Essay Questions

1. Tell about a time where you felt that you wanted to change your life. What was the situation? What did you do?

2. In your opinion, did Cho and Han make the right choice in the end? Imagine you are in their situation. What do you do?

Answer Key

Fill in the Blanks

Part A

1. After the play, there is a small after-party.
2. He recognized me with a single glance.
3. She puts a thread or two of black hair behind her ear.
4. We saw many famous people in the TV studio.
5. Let's meet at the bar for a drink.
6. Her son is the only thing that gives her comfort in her illness.
7. This actress took many drama lessons.
8. The son has the same mannerisms as his father.
9. We need a coordinator to coordinate all the activities.
10. They make efforts to expand the outreach to new people.
11. The outreach coordinator organized a beautiful event for new people.
12. Cows like to eat and relax at the pasture.
13. During the tennis match, he always feels a strong rush.
14. He comes to the shrine every day and prays.
15. After a short sprint, she slows down to a walk.

Part B

1. Life seem very monotonous to her. Every day seems the same.
2. Jack's eyes are coal-black.
3. The theater is packed today!
4. I feel contentment. I don't want to change a thing.
5. It's a fictitious character. This person doesn't really exist.
6. In her acting, she performs with such unbridled emotions.
7. We are joyful because we won.
8. Martha pushes back a stray curl of hair.
9. That was a spectacular performance. Everyone is impressed.
10. "You are very nice," Charles says fondly to Amber.

Part C

1. "There is no reason to do this!" she argues.
2. "Don't be afraid," Sam coos.
3. Suddenly the windows swing open.
4. Jonathan and Magen busy themselves with books.
5. Janet's fingers caress her husband's face.
6. They are so angry that they clench their fists.
7. "Don't go there!" I cry.

8. She will be very sad to hear this and will cry.
9. I'm very angry, but all I do is glare at him.
10. "Yes, I'll come!" I nod.
11. Stop the thief! He may run off with the money.
12. Dan will slam his glass on the table and leave.
13. "Stop telling me what to do!" I snap.
14. They cannot take it any longer, so they will speak up about their working conditions.
15. This singer has a phenomenal success.

Vocabulary Questions

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10. What does "snap" mean?

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Grammar Questions

1. The stage lights shine brightly _____ Cho's face.

c) on

2. I just feel like my character was a bit _____ real.

a) too

3. _____ the following few days, the play's grand success continues.

c) Over

4. Where _____ we go?

b) should

5. She is so excited to _____ on stage.

c) be

6. The play was a phenomenal success _____ something bothers her.

a) but

7. Han finally decides to speak _____ about the issues.

a) up

8. Cho _____ sings her first song.

c) reluctantly

9. We would provide you with a small salary _____ a house.

a) as well as

10. Do you have _____ moment?

c) a

Comprehension Questions

1. What bothers Cho? Why isn't she happy?

Cho feels like something is missing and Kodama's character gives her comfort. She realizes that she has started acting strangely. She begins acting less like herself and more like her character, Kodama, but she can't stop.

2. Why are Cho and Han approached by Mister Leon?

Their acting is spectacular. The play is a grand success with night after night of packed theaters. Everyone is talking about Cho and Han.

3. What does he promise them? And what does really happen?

Mister Leon offers them a contract and an impressive salary. They think they will be TV stars. In reality, after they accept his offer, their salaries are not what he originally promised. Their work is tiring and unrewarding with small parts in unpopular television show. Their lives are monotonous and boring.

4. Why does Han tells Cho they should both leave?

Han tells Cho they should both leave because he sees they can't keep going like that and that it's breaking them. He wants to see Cho happy and be with her wherever she feels good.

Essay Questions

1. Tell about a time where you felt that you wanted to change your life. What was the situation? What did you do?

Answers will vary.

2. In your opinion, did Cho and Han make the right choice in the end? Imagine you are in their situation. What do you do?

Answers will vary.

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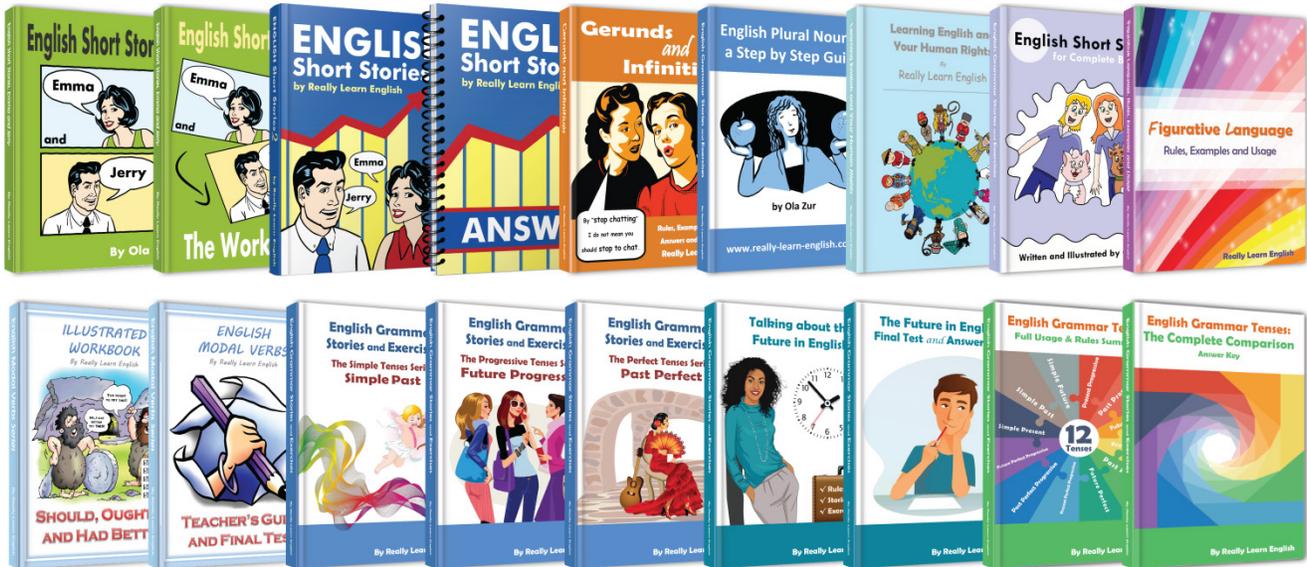
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